Palace on Wheels and the Heritage on Wheels in the Rajasthan Sector and the Deccan Odyssey in Maharashtra Sector; steam safari train—the Fairy Queen on Delhi—Alwar Sector. Further, Indian Railway has approved for luxury trains in the state of Punjab and Karnataka only.

(c) Tourist trains on the pattern of 'Palace on Wheels' can only be examined by the Ministry once comprehensive proposal in all respect is received from the concerned State Government. Presently, there is no such proposal for launching of such trains in Orissa.

Rail operation from India to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

547. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways are considering to expand its operations to Sri Lanka and Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the complete details in this regard;

(c) whether Indian Railways are setting up a 160 km. rail route from Colombo to Matara; and

(d) if so, the complete details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) There are already Rail links between India and Bangladesh. Following five Rail routes are existing between India and Bangladesh:

1. Gede (India)—Darsana (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

2. Singhabad (India)—Rohanpur (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

3. Petrapole (India)—Benapole (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge.

4. Radhikapur (India)—Birol (Bangladesh)—Broad Gauge on Indian side and Metre Gauge on Bangladesh side

5. Mahisasan (India)—Shahbazpur (Bangladesh)—Metre Gauge.

(c) and (d) On the request of Government of Sri Lanka, the Government of India has agreed to rehabilitate and upgrade Colombo-Matara Coast Line of Sri Lankan Railways. RITES Ltd. have carried out a feasibility

study for the project and submitted the same to Government of Sri Lanka for further action.

Proposal to introduce new rail services

548. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals to introduce new rail services are pending with Government;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Government of Rajasthan has submitted some proposals in this regard and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the criterion fixed for starting new rail services and the basis on which the proposals of the Government of Rajasthan have not been accepted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Out of 55 pairs of new trains announced in Rail Budget Speech 2006-07, only 8 Pairs of new trains are left for introduction.

(b) No, Sir. No such proposal has been received from Government of Rajasthan. However, some proposals have been received from people's representatives *inter alia* regarding introduction of trains.

(c) New train services are provided depending upon various factors like demand, traffic justification, availability of resources, operational feasibility etc. Introduction of new trains is an ongoing exercise over Indian Railways and train services are gradually provided irrespective of geographical boundaries every year. 5 pairs of new trains services announced in Railway Budget 2007-08 will serve Rajasthan.

Protection of senior level officers from private players

549. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of private players are entering the container train business, requiring senior level personnel with experience in railways' operations and logistics;